

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** East Decatur Island Fiber Replacement – Phase II

**Project Manager:** Jeff Porter, TFNC-Snohomish

**Location:** San Juan County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.6 Additions and Modifications to Transmission Facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to install about 500 feet of 2-inch diameter fiber optic conduit within BPA's Fidalgo-Lopez transmission line right-of-way on the east side of Decatur Island. Conduit would be placed in a trench that would extend from an existing vault located near Davis Beach to another existing vault east along Decatur Head Drive. The depth of the trench would be about 1 foot wide by 2 feet deep (dictated by the depth to the existing underground electrical cable located beneath the trench area). The trench would be dug with a backhoe. Grass and small shrubs would be removed in the trench area during excavation.

All proposed ground disturbance would be located in previously disturbed areas where imported fill was placed during installation of the underground electrical cable.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Nancy Wittpenn FOR

Tish Eaton  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 27, 2018

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

# Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

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## Project Site Description

Topography on Decatur Island consists of rolling hills with slopes that stretch from about 500 feet above sea level to sea level on the shores. Fiber conduit work would occur on the east-facing slope of Decatur Island about 85 feet northwest of the shoreline. On the transmission line right-of-way, which stretches from the east shore of Decatur to the west shore, vegetation consists of grasses with some shrubs bordered by deciduous and coniferous forest. Very low-density rural residential land use borders the project area on east Decatur Island.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A previously recorded and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible site (45SJ00169) is present at BPA's east Decatur Island cable landing where the vault near Davis Beach is located. The survey revealed that excavation of the trench would be in imported fill material placed on top of the existing underground electrical cable after it was installed. Since the proposed trenching would take place within this fill, BPA has determined there would be no adverse effects to site 45SJ00169. DAHP concurred with this determination on September 10, 2018.</p> <p>As previously agreed upon by the consulting parties in the HPPP (Historic Properties Protection Plan for Known Archaeological Site 45SJ00169), an archaeologist would be present for any of the proposed ground-disturbing activities at BPA's east Decatur cable landing where NRHP eligible site 45SJ00169 is located. DAHP concurred with BPA's plan to monitor the project on September 10, 2018.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance would occur when digging the trench. All displaced soil would be used as backfill in the trench. Potential for sediment movement offsite is minimal because work would occur during the dry season and not within floodplains or near water bodies.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal disturbance to existing vegetation would occur. No special-status species are present or known to occur at the project sites.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Work would occur in previously disturbed areas. No special-status species are present or known to occur at the project sites.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)

Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains are present at the project sites.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No wetlands are present at the project sites.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No potential to effect.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation: There would be no change in land use and no specially designated areas are present.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The trenched area would look the same as before the work following regrowth of vegetation.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Short-term dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No long-term impacts are anticipated.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No impact.

### Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Because the project would be contained within specific areas of BPA's right-of-way, notice of the project is not needed. Residents passing by on foot or car may notice workers and equipment for a short period of time although the activity would likely not look very different from normal right-of-way management activities.

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Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Nancy Wittpenn FOR  
Tish Eaton, ECT-4  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: September 27, 2018